To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Carmela Smith, I live in Ivoryton, CT. I am reaching out to ask you to support HB 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia.

My daughter was diagnosed last year with dyslexia towards the end of her sixth grade. I had initially asked the reading specialist early in the year if her reading struggle could be dyslexia, she stated, "No, we would have seen issues earlier." I continued to research the issue and connected with a professional who specializes in dyslexia. My husband and I privately paid to have our daughter assessed. The dyslexia specialist stated, "Your daughter is a bright child with a classic case of dyslexia." When we shared this with the school, they had to do their own testing. It was clear the school's special education teacher was not knowledgeable in administering or interpreting the tests properly. Thankfully, they had a dyslexia specialist consultant who assisted them in confirming the dyslexia diagnosis.

This speaks clearly to the need for teachers to complete a program of study in evidence based structured literacy interventions for students with dyslexia. They need to be knowledgeable with dyslexia because it impacts one in five people. Presently, my daughter's school district continues to make recommendations that are not reflective of evidenced based practice for students with dyslexia. This lack of knowledge creates poor intervention strategies that do more harm than good.

Please support HB 7254, An Act Requiring Special Education Teachers to Complete a Program of Study in Evidence-Based Structured Literacy Interventions for Students with Dyslexia. It is a step forward in supporting students with dyslexia. It is time for our public schools to catch up with the science on reading and dyslexia. Thank you.

Kind regards,

Carmela Smith